SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	DEDORT DOCU	MENTATION	24.65							
1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	REPORT DOCU									
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2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3 DISTRIBUTION	I/AVAILABILITY C	F REPO	RT					
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4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	ER(S)	5. MONITORING	ORGANIZATION F	REPORT	NUMBER(S)				
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Science Applications	6b OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	1	ONITORING ORGA Environment		edictio	on				
International Corporation	1-425-00-797		e search Faci							
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205 Montecito Avenue Monterey, CA 93940		Monter	^ey, CA 939	43-50	106					
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL	9. PROCUREMEN	T INSTRUMENT ID	ENTIFIC	ATION NUI	MBER				
Naval Air Systems Command	(If applicable) AIR-330H	1	N00228-84 - C-	3142						
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	<u> </u>	10 SOURCE OF	FUNDING NUMBER	RS						
Department of the Navy Washington, DC 20361		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO	PROJECT NO	TASK NO.		WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO				
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Mid-Latitud	e Wind Probabili	ty Program ((U)							
12 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)	7.7									
	rell, Jerry D.									
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16 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					****					
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AN (1) AD-A179 256
FG (2) 040200
CI (3) (U)
CA (5) SCIENCE APPLICATIONS INTERNATIONAL CORP MONTEREY CA
TI (6) Mid-Latitude Wind Probability Model.
TC (8) (U)
DN (9) Final rept. 12 Sep 84-11 May 86,
AU (10) Jarrell, Jerry D.
RD (11) Nov 1986
PG (12) 38
CT (15) NOO228-84-C-3142
PJ (16) W0513CC
TN (17) W0513CC00
RN (18) NEPRF-CR-86-06
RC (20) Unclassified report
DE (23) *STORMS, *WIND, *WEATHER FORECASTING, ESTIMATES,
       LATITUDE, MATHEMATICAL MODELS, MODELS, PROBABILITY,
        QUALITY CONTROL, TEST METHODS, TRACKING, TROPICAL
        CYCLONES, VORTICES, WIND VELOCITY, DECISION MAKING,
        TEMPERATE REGIONS, NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN, COMPUTER
        PROGRAMS. CYCLONES
DC (24) (U)
ID (25) Decision aids, Midlatitude storms, Strike probability(
        Storms), WUDN650784, PE63207N
IC (26) (U)
AB (27) A model to estimate the probability of a strike on a
        point by a mid-latitude storm was developed and tested.
        This model was based on a vortex tracking program
        operational for quality control at the Fleet Numerical
        Oceanography Center, Monterey, CA. An extension of this
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        Decision aid, Strike probability, Wind probability,
        Mid-latitudes, Wind, Wind velocity.
AC (28) (U)
DL (33) 01
SE (34) F
CC (35) 417277
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MID-LATITUDE WIND PROBABILITY MODEL

Jerry D. Jarrell
Science Applications International Corp.
Monterey, CA 93940

Contract No. N00228-84-C-3142

NOVEMBER 1986

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED



Prepared For:

NAVAL ENVIRONMENTAL PREDICTION RESEARCH FACILITY MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA 93943-5006

1. Introduction

The concept of using probabilities to extend the useful life of storm forecasts was attempted nearly thirty years ago by Kimball (1958) and later Appleman (1962). Both used graphical means to estimate the probability of typhoon winds around U.S. Air Bases in the Far East. Practical use of probabilities began when Jarrell (1978) developed computerized methods to sum the tropical cyclone probabilities over The best known of these programs is the strike probability (STRIKP) which the Navy, Air Force and National Weather Service use to assess the likelihood of a tropical cyclone passing close enough to a base or city to cause major Therein lies the definition of strike -- that the cyclone passed close enough to cause major damage. STRIKP is driven by point forecasts issued by a tropical cyclone warning center.

The idea of adapting the STRIKP model to provide comparable sophistication to the mid latitude forecasters has been hampered by the lack of centralized consistent point forecasts on mid latitude cyclones. However, point forecasts in a useable format became available with the development of the Quality Control Vortex Tracking Program (QCVTP) (see Tsui et al. 1982).

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the proven strike probability concept can be successfully operated using the QCVTP data bases. It should be noted that a statistical proof of the concept is not intended.

The concept of a mid-latitude wind probability model was formulated by SAIC under NEPRF contract No. N00228-84-C-3142. The need for a mid-latitude wind probability model is to aid ship captains and other decision makers in evading damaging winds from mid-latitude or extratropical cyclones. The cyclones are forecast but each forecast element (e.g., track, intensity and size) is subject to error. Wind probability helps allow for error by preventing overstimulation at points along the forecast track and understimulation at points off the track which are also significantly threatened.

The model accepts QCVTP type storm input data (low pressure center latitude, longitude, and pressure deficit, as well as the radius, ellipticity and angle of the major axis of the zero anomaly countour (ZAC)) at analysis time and up to 5 prognosis times (12-60 hrs). The output consists of strike and gale force wind probabilities in both instantaneous and elapsed time modes.

2. Strike Probability

The tropical cyclone working definition of a "strike" is that the cyclone passes within an area defined by semicircles of 75 and 50 n mi with the larger being on the left in the northern hemisphere (facing direction of motion). This allows for a greater extent of strong winds on the right side (see Jarrell and Brand, 1983). This definition appears inappropriate here since there is a large area of fairly light winds near the center of an extratropical cyclone and then the strong winds occur in a broad region often extending hundreds of miles from the center.

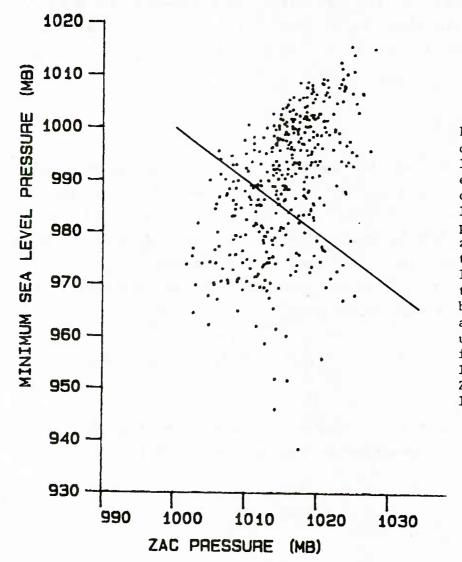


Figure 1. Scatter diagram of Oct-Dec 1984 North Pacific extratropical cyclones minimum sea level pressure vs pressure at the zero anomaly contour (ZAC). line indicates the demarcation between strike area definitions using the 1000 isobar below the line and one half ZAC above the line.

It was first thought that perhaps a more reasonable definition would be entry into the area of depressed pressure, or within the zero anomaly contour (Tsui et al. This area is quite large--often 5 grid lengths and greater in radius (a grid length is 206 n mi at 60°N); consequently, being struck would then mean little more than being in an area of disturbed weather. The strike definition that was adopted is the storm passing close enough so the station falls within the 1000 mb isobar. For storms with a high central pressure so that the area within the 1000 mb isobar is small or nonexistent, this strike area is limited on the low side by half the radius of the zero anomaly contour (measured in grid lengths). The demarcation between the two definitions of the strike area is shown as a straight line in figure 1. Strike probability may therefore be defined as:

$$P_s = P(d \le R_s)$$

where $R_{\rm S}$ is the strike radius; $R_{\rm S}$ =KR_Z, and $R_{\rm Z}$ =the ZAC radius. The multiplier K is defined as the maximum of [(central pressure - 1000)/(pressure deficit) or 0.5] and d is the passing distance. Now since both d and $R_{\rm S}$ are random variables (although both are forecast, there is uncertainty in their actual values) it is necessary to restate the above expression as:

$$P_S = \int P(R_S \ge r, d = r)dr = \int P(R_S \ge r | d = r) P(d = r)dr.$$

In this initial model the assumption is made that size errors are independent of position errors and hence that

$$P(R_S \ge r | d = r) = P(R_S \ge r)$$
.

Thus the expression to be integrated becomes:

$$P_S = \int P(R_S \ge r) P(d = r) dr$$

The expression P(Rs>r) was evaluated by creating a probability contingency table of the radius of the ZAC observed (in the QCVTP data) versus that forecast (see Table use of The probability term evaluated by the contingency table is being estimated on the climatological experience. This could have been accomplished by parameterizing the distribution; however, from standpoints of sample size and convenience of computation the contingency table is preferable. Thus the first expression $P(R_s > r)$ can be viewed as $P(R_S > r R_f)$ P(R_f) $P(R_f)$ is the probability of forecast R_f being made; $P(R_f) = 1.0$, since the forecast is known. Table values are given for $r = \langle 2.5, 2.5-3.0, 3.0-3.5 \dots \rangle 5.5$ in multiples of grid lengths. Since r takes on these discrete values, the above integral is treated as a summation and the term P(d = r) is evaluated as the

$$P(r - .25 < d < r + .25)$$

which is a ring about the point of interest of width one half grid length. This term is position dependent. Required is the probability that the storm center falls within concentric rings about the point of interest. If the rings were centered on the storm forecast, then a contingency table approach could again be used at considerable savings in program complexity and execution time. The most reasonable way to evaluate this term is by fitting a parametric distribution to historical forecast errors. The distribution is then inte-

grated over rings with a variable center location relative to the distribution center. A bivariate normal distribution has typically been used to fit such errors because it has characteristics which match those of the error population (positively and negatively unbounded with a central tendency in two components). See Crutcher et al, 1982 for a discussion of this distribution and forecast errors. The goodness of fit has not been determined in this case.

Table 1. The probability of a particular mean ZAC radius being exceeded in the verifying analysis given the twenty-four hour forecast. Similar tables are used for other forecast intervals. The column under the 0.0 grid lengths heading would be 100% except for dying storms whose frequency is shown under the column NONE.

24	4-HOU	R TAB	LE OF	EXCE	EDANC	OF R				
	0.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	NONE	SAMPLE
FORECAST										
<2.5	72.	19.	10.	7.	3.	0.	0.	0.	28.	89
2.5-3.0	78.	51.	22.	7.	3.	0.	0.	0.	22.	68
3.0 - 3.5	90.	80.	59.	26.	13.	3.	1.	0.	10.	93
3.5-4.0	89.	85.	70.	51.	22.	6.	3.	1.	11.	94
4.0-4.5	86.	85.	77.	68.	41.	14.	5.	1.	14.	73
4.5-5.0	85.	82.	78.	72.	51.	29.	12.	3.	15.	68
5.0-5.5	88.	84.	77.	74.	67.	53.	28.	12.	12.	43
>5.5	89.	87.	87.	80.	71.	64.	50.	36.	11.	70

Time integration is handled just as it is in the tropical programs except for the following:

- a. Given the tropical input from warnings, all forecast sequences run from tau = 0 to some last tau, usually 72 hours. With mid-latitude cyclones, the low frequently appears first on a prog chart.
- b. Points are frequently threatened by more than one low center over the 60 hour period of integration.

Probabilities from different storms are summed as if independent.

$$P(A \text{ or } B) = P(A) + P(B) - P(A \text{ and } B)$$

and $P(A \text{ and } B) = P(A)P(B)$

c. All time integrated probabilities are given for the entire 60 hour period. Exception (a) (above) causes probabilities to suddenly appear on a time line whereas exception (b) causes humps on the time line unlike the smooth increase to a peak then a decrease over time as seen in the tropical probability curve.

Sample strike probabilities are shown in figure 2.

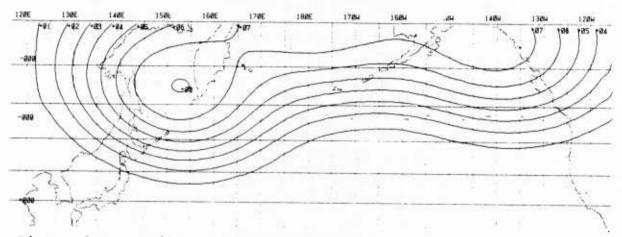


Figure 2a. Strike probability (units are tens of %)

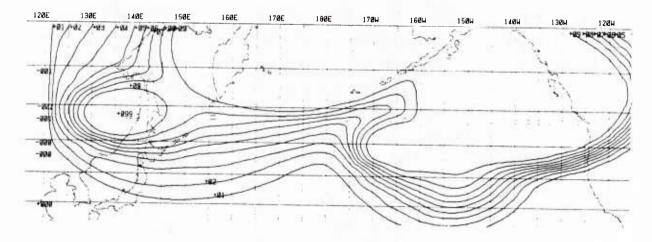


Figure 2b. Elapsed time strike probability (units are tens of %).

Figure 2. 24-hour probability forecast for 1200 GMT 8 November 1984, North Pacific Ocean.

3. Wind Probability Model

The wind probability model is designed to produce the probability of gale force winds (≥ 28 kt) although provision was retained to include one other wind speed (e.g., storm force or 48 kt). Both instantaneous and elapsed time wind probabilities will be provided in the same format as strike probabilities.

The form of the wind probability is

$$\int P(V_O > 28 | x,y) P(x,y) dxdy$$

where V_O = the wind speed at point x_O, y_O , the point of interest; x,y is the location of the storm center. Clearly $P(V_O > 28 \mid x,y)$ is highly dependent on the location of point x_O, y_O relative to point x,y. What is needed is a model to relate the wind probability to locations. The relationship of wind to location relative to the storm center is a function of storm size, pressure depth, the shape of the pressure profile and the assymetry of the storm.

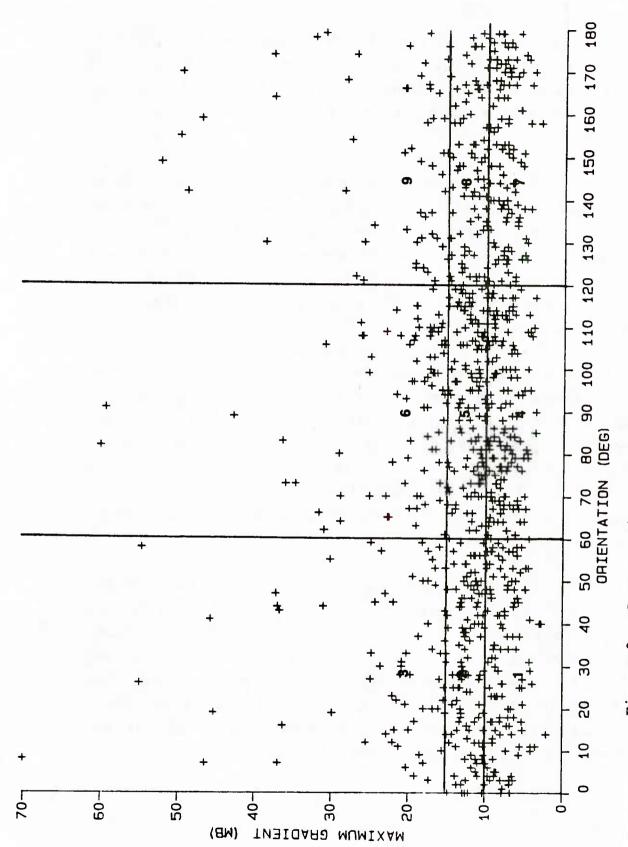
In an analysis mode these parameters can be measured and converted to good wind estimates by use of the gradient or geostrophic wind equations. This also applies to the prognostic mode except that the various parameters are of unknown accuracy; hence the forecast winds are of unknown value. In a probabilistic mode one wants to find the sets of parameters which produce winds of interest, for example, over 28 kt or gale force winds. The joint probability of these sets occurring would then be estimated. The more variables (e.g., size, minimum pressure, profile shape, as well as direction and distance of the point of interest from the storm)

involved in each alogrithm the more complex the problem. Also additional variables cause additional stratification of the available data base; thus the size of the data base in effect limits the complexity of the joint probability solution.

In the tropical models, the wind field was assumed to be totally defined by three parameters, maximum wind, a scaling radius and forward speed. Forward speed had a rather minor role and was assumed to be perfectly forecast. This left only two parameters to describe the wind field. Their joint probability, given the forecast, was readily determined from climatological forecast data.

There are no similar models for extratropical cyclones. It is assumed here that the assymetric radial profile of winds is a function of the maximum pressure gradient and orientation of the major ellipse axis. The maximum pressure gradient (in a mean sense) can be computed by the pressure differential divided by the length of the minor axis. Consequently storms were classed by maximum gradient vs angle of orientation of the major axis.

The distribution of these classes is shown in the scatter diagram of Figure 3. Presumably storms with the strongest mean gradient have the strongest winds. Next contingency tables of forecast classes versus observed classes were computed; thus the probability of a particular class occurring, given a forecast, could now be estimated (see Table 2). The spatial distribution of winds was now derived separately for each storm class.



cyclones maximum pressure gradient (mb Scatter diagram of October 1984 - April 1985 North classification based on maximum gradient vs orientalength) vs orientation of major axis (deg). Pacific extratropical tion is shown. Figure 3.

Table 2. The probability of a storm becoming a member of each size-depth class after 24 hours given its particular forecast class. Percentages left to right in a row would add to 100% except for dying storms.

24-HOUR CLASS CONTINGENCY TABLE OBSERVED CLASS

										SAMPLE
FCST	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	SIZE
CLASS										
1	22.	19.	6.	10.	8.	4.	11.	5.	1.	79
2	9.	40.	13.	6.	11.	4.	4.	4.	4.	53
3	3.	26.	37.	3.	3.	0.	5.	3.	5.	38
4	7.	7.	4.	26.	14.	4.	11.	8.	1.	114
5	2.	5.	3.	11.	32.	18.	5.	1.	2.	87
6	3.	2.	8.	12.	10.	31.	0.	2.	5.	59
7	9.	3.	2.	12.	8.	0.	26.	20.	3.	65
8	3.	12.	1.	7.	12.	6.	7.	19.	15.	68
9	2.	7.	9.	2.	4.	7.	9.	22.	24.	46
_										

The approach was to compute winds on a grid centered on the cyclone. This is a special symmetrical grid with concentric circles of grid points increasing in number outward so that all grid spaces contain equal areas (see Figure 4). Stored at grid points for each class storm is the probability that gale force winds would be observed at the center or grid space #1 if a storm (of the given class) were located in the grid space in question (see Figure 5). Assymmetry is considered at the expense of a somewhat complex model since there are now 71 grid points for each integration step. However, because the grid spaces are equi-area, the computation of the probability of the storm occupying a grid space is simplified.

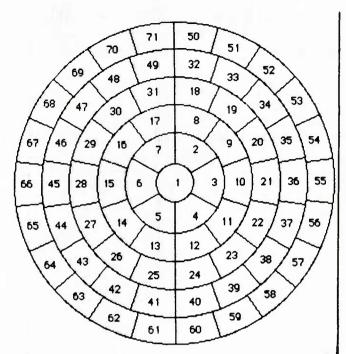


Figure 4. Equiarea grid which was placed over moving cyclone to extract wind speeds for evaluation of conditional wind probabilities. The radius of the central circle is about 85 n mi and the outer circle 720 n mi. Numbers are grid identifying numbers.

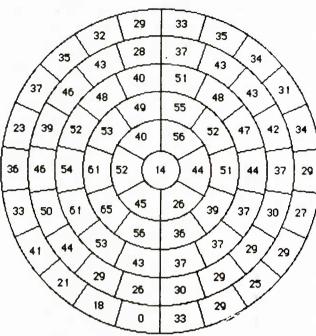


Figure 5. Grid of gale force wind probabilities for class three (N-NE and strong) cyclones given in whole percent. This is based only on October 1984 - April 1985 data.

With this grid oriented model the operative wind probability expression becomes:

$$P(V \ge V_g, c=K, g=L | c=K | g=L)$$
 $P(g=L | forecast x,y)$ $P(c=K | forecast)$

where the first product term is the probability that the wind equals or exceeds gale force given that a storm of class = K is located in grid space L. The second product term is the probability that a storm occupies grid space L given the forecast for this time x,y. The last term is the probability that the storm is of class K given the forecast class. An assumption of independence between the last two terms is implicit.

The resulting probabilities are reasonable in appearance. Sample 24-hour wind probabilities are shown in figure 6.

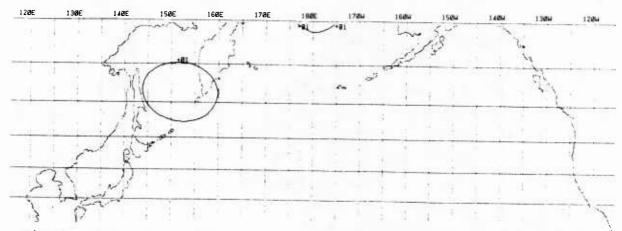


Figure 6a. Gale force wind probability (units are tens of %).

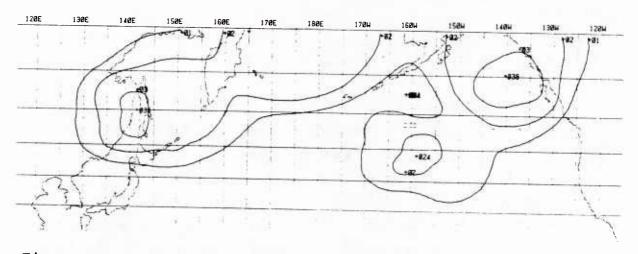


Figure 6b. Elapsed time gale force wind probability (units are tens of %).

Figure 6. 24-hour wind probability forecast for 1200 GMT 8 November 1984, North Pacific Ocean.

4. Independent Testing

An independent data set of FNOC analysis and prognosis surface pressure fields was obtained for December 1983 through March 1984. Forecast intervals were from 12 to 48 hours by 12 hour increments. The QCVTP program was run on these fields for the North Pacific Ocean, providing the basis for the strike and wind probability computation. To maintain approximate serial independence between fields, every third 12 hourly date-time-group was selected for probability computations. In all, 56 date-time groups were chosen which involved 99 different cyclones which appeared in an average of 2.2 prognosis series each (there are 244 12 hourly fields in the December-March period: however, several fields were missing).

4.1 Verification Data

Since probabilities would be computed on prognosis series of 48 hours long initiated every 36 hours, all analyses would be used as verification data (except for the first few). For the purpose of strike verification, each cyclone was examined against each grid point over the Pacific sector of the FNOC 63x63 northern hemisphere grid. A strike was considered to have occurred if the grid point fell within an elliptical strike area surrounding the cyclone. This strike area was defined as an ellipse approximating the 1000mb contour or within 1/2 the distance out to the zero anomaly contour, which ever was greater. A file was created showing which grid points had been struck for each available analysis date-time-group. Gale force winds were verified in much the same way except that geostrophic winds were calculated at

grid points. When 80% of the geostrophic wind exceeded gale force (28kt) it was considered that gale force winds had been observed at the grid point. The factor of 80% is used to compensate for the fact that geostrophic winds generally over estimate actual surface winds and particularly so around cyclones. As with strikes, a file was created showing which grid points had received gale force winds.

With the strike and wind verification data in place, each selected date-time was processed by computing strike and wind probabilities for each grid point. These were then categorized into 5% cells and a running sum of the probabilities, the verification (0 if not struck, 1 if struck and similiar for winds) and case count were maintained for each cell. Comparisons were made of the expected occurrence of strikes or gale force winds versus the observed occurrences.

4.2 Test Results

Figures 7 through 10 show the results of these comparisons. The straight line from lower left to upper right represents the expected frequency of occurrence. The asterisk represents the actual frequency of occurrence. The vertical I-beam represents 99% confidence limits around the expected frequencies based on a "t" test. Visually the agreement between observed strike frequencies and expected strike frequencies is quite good. However, it should be noted that far too many (much more than 1%) of the observed values fall outside the 99% confidence limits. The visual

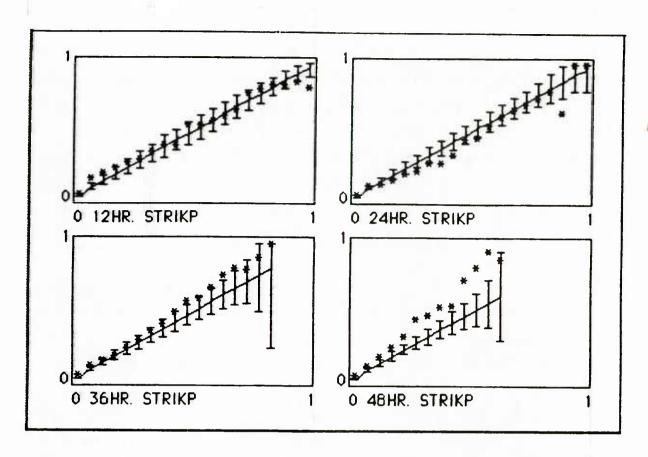


Figure 7. Comparison of expected (diagonal line) vs the actual (*) strike frequencies. I-beams represent 99% confidence limits (t-test) about the expected frequency. Both the ordinate and abscissa are frequencies (0 to 1).

fit confirms that the strike probability is a good estimate of the actual strike frequency, while the excessive number of cases falling outside the 99% confidence limits points out that there are limitations on the applicability of at least some of the model assumptions. For example, in the instantaneous mode there is apparently a tendency to underestimate strike probabilities. This can be attributed to better FNOC model forecasting in the independent cases than in the development sample. It would not be surprising that such changes would occur either because the models change (note the independent set predates by one year the development set) or

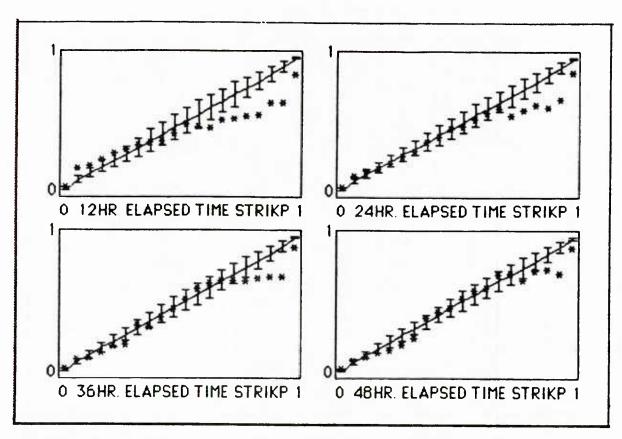


Figure 8. Comparison of expected (diagonal line) vs the actual (*) elapsed time strike frequencies. I-beams represent 99% confidence limits (t-test) about the expected frequency. Both the ordinate and abscissa are frequencies (0 to 1).

simply due to a natural difference in the two rather limited data sets. Notice that in the elapsed-time-strike-probabilities there is a tendency to significantly overestimate probabilities which runs counter to the previously mentioned problem and consequently the agreement between expected and observed improves over time. Overestimation in the summation process is caused by a faulty parameterization of the independence of strikes in consecutive time steps. This would be an overestimate of independence perhaps because large time steps allow substantial storm movement between probability computations.

The comparison for gale force winds is a different story (see figures 9 and 10). Visually it is apparent that there is little predictive skill in the wind probabilities except at

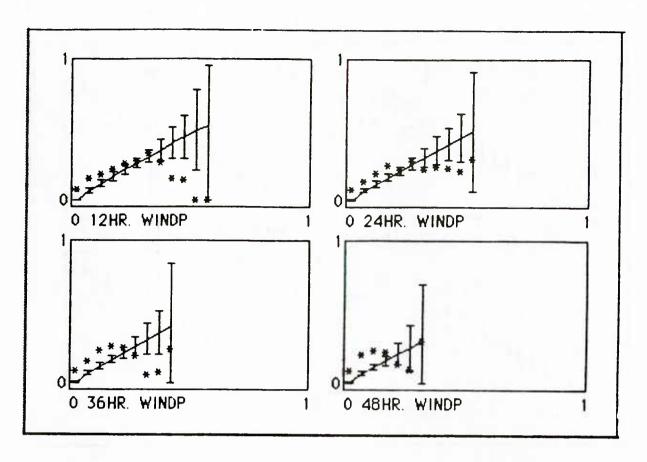


Figure 9. Comparison of expected (diagonal line) vs the actual (*) gale force wind frequencies. I-beams represent 99% confidence limits (t-test) about the expected frequency. Both the ordinate and abscissa are frequencies (0 to 1).

low probability levels and even then they are biased on the low side. It is not likely that this poor agreement can be attributed to one cause, but the lack of a good model of the spatial distribution of winds around extratropical cyclones is doubtless a major contributing factor. QCVTP by its methodology of fitting ellipses to low pressure aras is not a good estimator of wind fields. The low side bias may be attributable to using 80% of the geostrophic wind for verification and indeed using 75% of that wind essentially elimates that bias, but of course the agreement with the high probabilities in comparably aggravated since they are generally over forecast. One of the problems which plagues the wind probabilities is that there tends to be a very large central

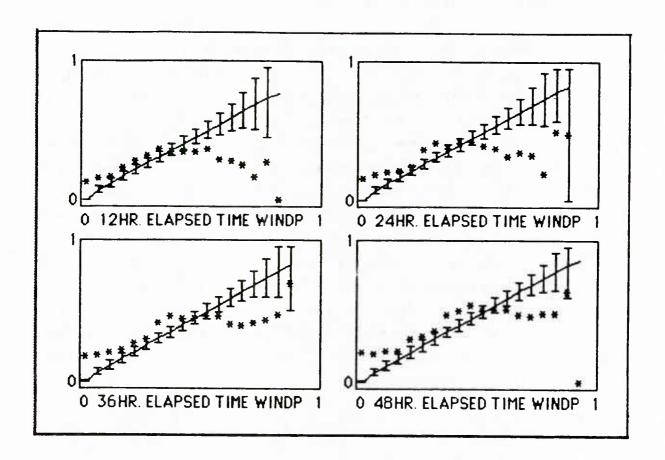


Figure 10. Comparison of expected (diagonal line) vs the actual (*) elapsed time gale force wind frequencies. I-beams represent 99% confidence limits (t-test) about the expected frequency. Both the ordinate and abscissa are frequencies (0 to 1).

area within an extratropical cyclone which is characterized by light winds. For this reason very high strike probabilities are associated with light winds. These also tend to be associated with high wind probabilities as can be seen in figures 9 and 10.

5. Summary and Recommendations

A realistic model has been developed and tested for midlatitude strike probabilities. A comparable model for wind
probabilities proved to be much less reliable and not usable.
The definition of strike does not necessarily imply severe
weather from the standpoint of naval operations, but it does
imply that one of the necessary conditions required for
severe weather, the presence of a cyclonic storm, has been
met. With subjective screening of the severity of a storm,
STRIKP can be used as an early warning precursor of severe
weather -- perhaps the basis of a storm or gale condition III
or IV (gales are possible within 48 or 72 hours respectively). Similarly, for ship routing, a high strike probability
may not be suitable justification for definitive evasive
actions but rather to position oneself favorably for evasion
should it be warranted later.

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APPENDIX A USER'S MANUAL FOR PROGRAM WNPPSG

1.0 Introduction

The Pacific mid-latitude strike and wind probablilty model was developed by SAIC under NEPRF contract No. NO0228-84-C-3142. The reason for developing a mid-latitude cyclone probability model is to aid ship's captains and other decision makers in evading dangerous conditions in mid-latitude or extratropical cyclones. Track, intensity, and size of these cyclones are forecast, but each forecast element is subject to error. Probablity helps allow for error by preventing overstimulation at points along the forecast track and understimulation at points off the track which are also significantly threatened.

The model accepts SEIS output storm data ,(low pressure center latitude, longitude, pressure deficit, as well as the radius, ellipticity and angle of the major axis of the zero anamoly countour (ZAC)) at analysis time and up to 5 prognosis times (12–60 hrs), as input. The output consists of strike and gale force wind probabilities in both instantaneous and time elapsed modes.

2.0 Program Operation

The Model software is called WNPPSG (<u>WiNd Probability</u>, <u>Polar Sterographic Grid</u>). WNPPSG accepts real time output from the SEIS program as input. The files from SEIS are: ANSTRM, FCSTRM, and QCDATE. QCDATE is the current date on which SEIS was run. ANSTRM is in Update format and is updated by the JCL.. ANSTRM consists of low pressure center latitude, longitude, and pressure deficit, as well as the radius, ellipticity and angle of the major axis of the zero anamoly countour (ZAC) at analysis time and up to 5 prognosis times (12 - 60 hrs). FCSTRM consists of the same parameters of storms that are forecast to occur but which have not yet been observed.

WNPPSG also reads files PDLTR and CLSTAT. PDLTR is a file of bivariate normal probabilities and CLSTAT is a file of climatological statistics on the frequency of occurrence of storms of various radii and of storm classes based on orientation versus maximum pressure gradient.

Output is a series of plots of strike and gale force wind probabilities in both instantaneous and time elapsed modes.

The Technical aspects of this program are described in the final report for Contract N00228-84-C-3142.

The following are some examples of the real time input files used by WNPPSG.

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Figure 1. A segment of the File ANSTRM, 16 storms have been omitted.

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55 53	0	0	0	0	0	0		11	58	9	30
62 67	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	12	67	22	39
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56 62	0	0	0	0	0	0		11	81	21	17
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860302001826		00 1	990	22 39	1792112	261-23	27	90	64	120	
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850302121943	85030400	12 1	980	27120	721643	41-35	129	-9	221	5	
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Figure 2. A segment of the File FCSTRM, 2 storms have been omitted.

JCL for the Program WNPPSG.

***EOR**

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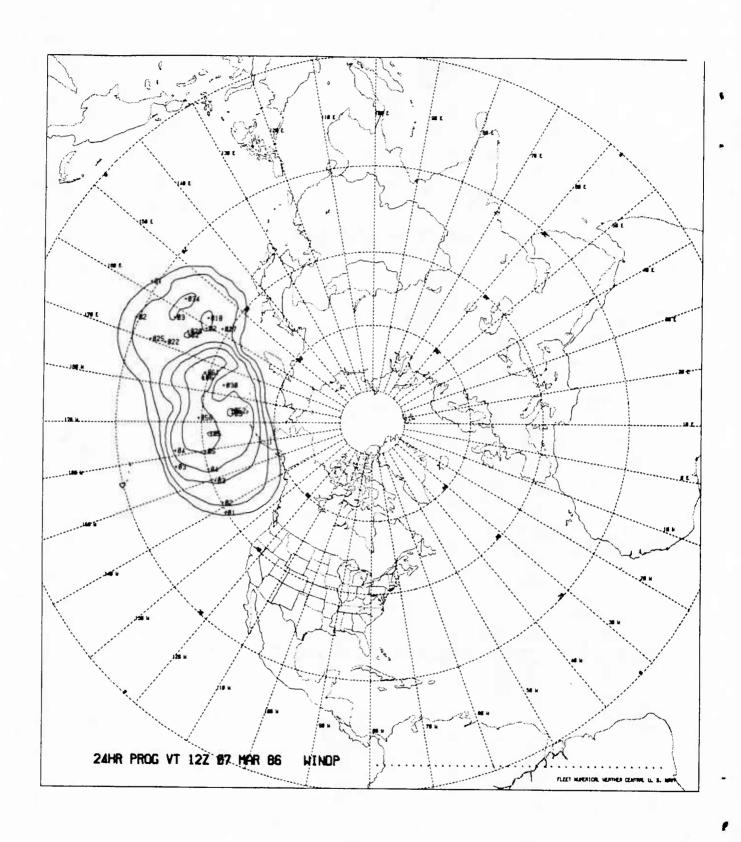


Figure 3. 24 Hour Elapsed Time Gale Force Wind Probability for the Pacific.

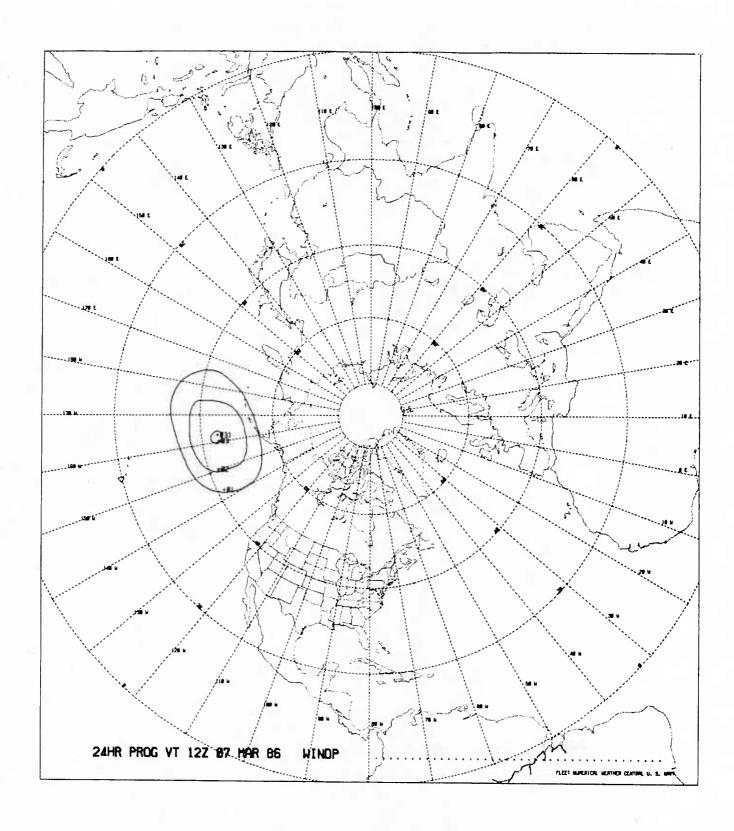


Figure 4. 24 Hour Gale Force Wind Probability for the Pacific.

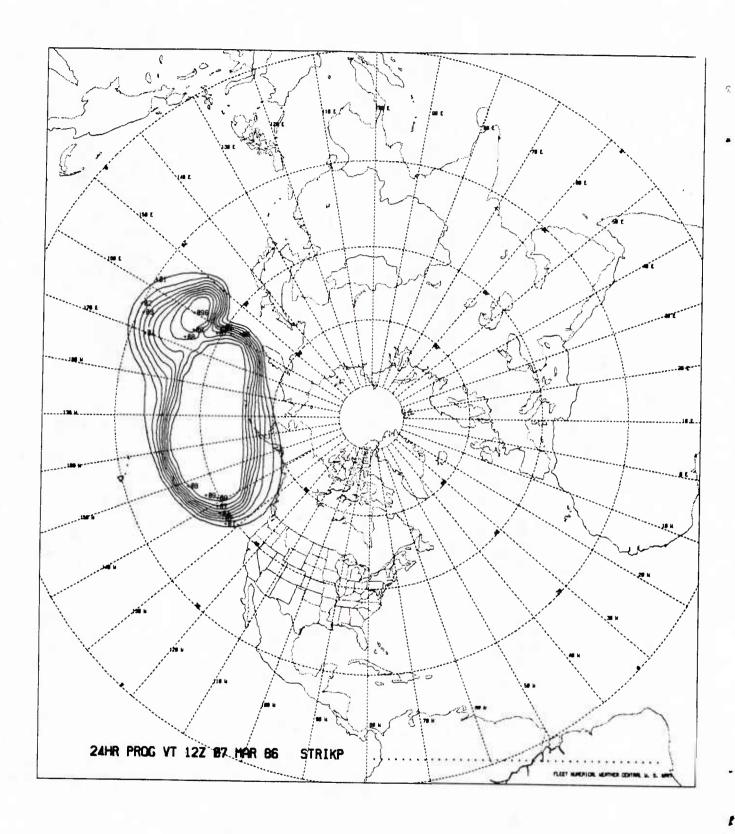


Figure 5. 24 Hour Elapsed Time Strike Probability for the Pacific.

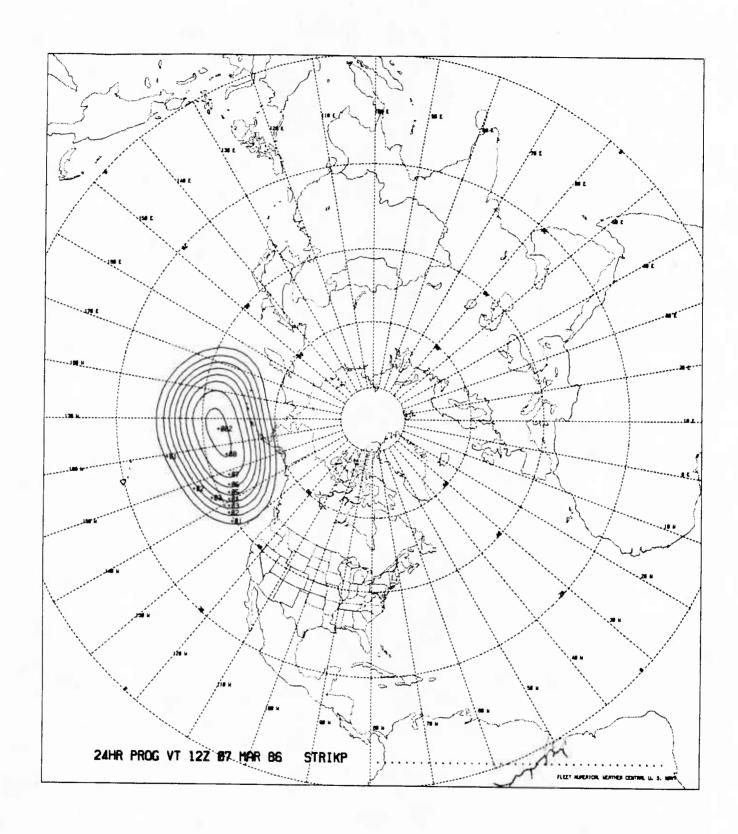


Figure 6. 24 Hour Strike Probability for the Pacific.

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